

Job Development & Design: Creating Volunteer Jobs

Possibly the most important step in the process of volunteer management is creating the volunteer job itself. This is the firm foundation that your successful volunteer initiative is built upon. A poorly designed volunteer job, one that has not been clearly defined or is initiated without planning, can lead to problems with retaining your non-paid staff.

The proactive solution is to begin by designing a volunteer's job with the help of your paid staff (See our tips on "Writing a Good Job Description"). Collaborate on ideas that develop a clear picture of how the volunteer will work within your agency or organization. Remember that the tasks outlined should be reasonable and appropriate for volunteers.

Make certain the job allows the volunteer to have some 'ownership' for the duties involved and the outcome. The task of creating and managing a filing system will be more rewarding than the job of merely typing file names, and the overall task will accomplish both.

Once you've determined the job to be done by a volunteer, a precise, yet flexible job description needs to be written. Theirs should have the same format as your paid staff's job descriptions, but focus clearly on the results that you want the volunteer to accomplish.

Remember, the volunteer job description is a fluid document. It should be re-visited often throughout the life of the position and updated to meet the needs and interest of the volunteer and your agency or organization.

Allowing your volunteers the freedom to think for themselves shows you value their skills. If appropriate, involve them in planning how a task can be accomplished. Listen to their ideas and appreciate their individual input.

Let them in on "the big picture". Understanding the results of their involvement in a project can greatly impact a volunteer's sense of worth and dedication. Are they helping increase literacy among adults? Improving a neighbor's quality of life? What measurable outcome does your organization use that is directly affected by your volunteer's dedication? These are tangible results that should be shared on their level.

Your organization may rely heavily on volunteers. Organizing, designing and implementing good job descriptions and practices will ensure your success as well as the satisfaction of your volunteers.

A
Volunteer
Management
Tip From:



Missoula
Senior Service
Corps

337 Stephens Ave.
Missoula, MT 59801
(406) 728-7682



Missoula
Aging Services